Phoenix Historical Society
Organized in 1998; Opened in 1999

Margaret (Bolz) Croly, Editor
rlcmac@outlook.com

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Article and photos by Susan Chester, City Councilor, Phoenix, Oregon

Getting to Know the People of Phoenix, Oregon

On Monday, April 21, I joined City Councilors Suetos, Camberos, Shainholz and Mayor Al Muelhoefer on a tour of our Phoenix History Museum to learn about the history of our City. This tiny museum is chock filled with interesting items and artifacts from our local history, and is supported by dedicated and knowledgeable locals. This is a great place to visit and learn more about Phoenix, Oregon!

The Phoenix Historical Society Museum is a fully volunteer, non-profit organization. Their mission is building community through historical preservation, interpretation and education. If you haven't visited recently, come and check it out and let us know what you think! Open Thursday-Saturday from 1 pm - 4 pm.

Find more detailed information on their website: https://phoenixoregonheritage.org/museum/

A Home For Those in Need by Bill Miller

In summer 1870, two old and frail strangers walked into Jacksonville, alone and penniless.

Jonathan Davis of Burlington, Iowa, was on his way to see his son in Portland when, somewhere north of Sacramento, he was robbed at gunpoint.

With no money and forced to walk all the way to Oregon, Davis' ankle became infected. Severe complications set in even before he reached the Siskiyou Mountains. Each throbbing step tested his will and ability to continue.

A few weeks earlier, W.L. Johnson, blind and suffering from a severe cold that filled his lungs with fluid, had also been robbed.

"After taking all the money I had in the world," he said, "they threw me into the Truckee River, from which, after repeated efforts, I succeeded in escaping."

Davis somehow made it to Jacksonville, where his leg was amputated. Whether he ever saw his son again isn't reported.

Johnson was nursed back to health by the county doctor. Where he went after that is also a mystery.

In both cases and in hundreds more, neither man had to pay.

Even before Oregon became a state, Jackson County commissioners awarded a yearly contract to a local doctor, allowing him to run what they called the County Hospital. It was really nothing more than the physician's office or home.

In addition to medical services for those who had no ability to pay, the doctor would house the sick and those with disabilities, elderly men or women who couldn't work anymore and had no means of support.

The biggest flaw in the system was when the county's annual contract was awarded to a different doctor. The helpless men and women living with one doctor were forced to move to the new doctor's home or office.

The county also instituted a program that gave a modest monthly payment to individuals who had a place to live, but no money for food. It was a plan especially helpful to elderly widows and widowers who didn't have family to help.

After nearly 60 years, the county decided to take action. In 1907, land north of Talent was purchased, and construction began on an actual hospital building.

"The paupers who have been maintained by the county for so long are now comfortably quartered in a big tent," said a newspaper story, "but it will not be long before a hospital will be ready for their accommodation."

Finally, those who faced sickness, misfortune or some other cause had a safe home and friends. The residents must have also relished the hospital's hot and cold running water, three inside bathrooms and electric lights, and, of course, no worries about food.

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Did You Know?

Fun Fact: Did you know that the Phoenix Oregon Police Department handles almost all investigations internally? That's right, outside of a handful of specific major crimes, our team handles all major crimes inside the city, such as assaults, frauds, robberies, major thefts, etc. In planning to handle an increased caseload over time as the city grows, our new building has these fancy new interview rooms!

Our new building has two interview rooms, a hard interview room and a soft interview room, both serving different purposes. The soft interview room (pictured with the couch and two chairs) is meant for interviews with victims of crimes, suspects of low level crimes, meetings with outside law enforcement or other agencies, and for any other type of more formal interview. The hard interview room (pictured with metal table) is meant for more serious interviews with suspects, allowing our agency to interview suspects in a formally controlled environment.

This is just one of many ways the Phoenix Police Department is not only planning for the future, but adding new ways to better serve the community every single day!

By Brian Buckner

Phoenix Historical Society Board Members

Dick Croly: President

Ken Kantor: Vice President

Dorothy Cotton: Secretary

Dorothy Cotton: Treasurer

Lorraine Sexton

Margaret Croly

Our Legacy - Marci Klimek: Class of 2006

Beyond Phoenix Talent Schools

Since graduation from Phoenix High School in 2006, Marci Klimek has built an impressive career as both an elite runner and a professional in the medical and legal fields. At Linfield University, she set school records in the 5k, 10k, and 6k in cross country while earning All-American honors and becoming a Northwest Conference Champion. Her success on the track transitioned into an outstanding post-collegiate running career, where she qualified twice for the Olympic Trials in the marathon, placed 10th at the Chicago Marathon, and secured victories at the Portland and Hartford Marathons. She also placed 12th at the London Marathon and 16th at the New York City Marathon, with a personal best marathon time of 2:30:28 at the California International Marathon.

Marci's professional career has been equally accomplished. She has worked in medical administration, spending five years as an administrator for the Shoulder Service at Massachusetts General Hospital before moving to Weeks Family Medicine in Bend. Most recently, she worked as a paralegal at Watson Law Office. Currently, she is taking time away from work to focus on her newest and "most cherished role" - being a mother to her four-month-old baby.

Phoenix-Talent Schools

LOVE FOR PTS

"My experience with the Phoenix-Talent School District has been fantastic. I came to the school district in 4th grade and made lifelong friends every step of the way. Every teacher made a positive and lasting impact on my development. From Nancy Olson in 4th grade, to Ms. Murphy and Cesar Flores at Talent Middle School, who empowered me to feel cared for and seen at a time when my parent were divorcing. I still have a handwritten letter of encouragement that I received from Mr. Flores at the end of my eighth grade cross country season to keep working hard at running and at being a good friend and person."

As quoted by Marci Klimek

A Home For Those In Need, continued from Page 2

In 1911, regents of the Oregon Agricultural College (now Oregon State University) were ready to set up a branch experiment station in Southern Oregon. It would be part of a statewide network of sites aimed at studying the variety of soils, climate and other natural conditions, and the effect they might have on local agriculture.

Twenty acres surrounding the county hospital were set aside for the station, and a two-story superintendent's home and office was built along the still unpaved road that would become the Pacific Highway.

Officially, the hospital and experiment station complex was 'the County Farm," but it didn't always stick.

"The problem was," said onetime Prospect resident Jack Hollenbeak, "everybody called it the county poor farm, so that put a brand on it."

By the late 1970s, as Social Security and other community programs reduced the need for a "poor farm," the county hospital was repaired and turned over to the Southern Oregon Education Service District.

The county experiment station moved to Hanley Road, and the fallow fields and orchards near Talent soon were home to the county's Community Justice Work Release Center, animal shelter, and a vehicle maintenance facility.

Jack County Poor Farm built in 1907, circa 1930s, located between Phoenix and Talent, Courtesy of Southern Oregon Historical Society

Phoenix Historical Society & Museum
607 N. Church Street
P. O. Box 1466
Phoenix, Oregon 97535

Telephone (541) 512-0614

Open Thursday thru Saturday
1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Any historical information regarding Phoenix would be much appreciated by anyone receiving this newsletter. Please send to above address or editor.

Become a member of Phoenix Historical Society for just $10.00 a year per person. Join now and help preserve the history of Phoenix and the surrounding area.
Regular PHS meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at **7:00 p.m. at the Phoenix Museum.**

This 'n That

It's that time of the year once again to attend to sprucing up the Phoenix Museum grounds. An abundance of pinecones have fallen from the two majestic, century-old plus pine trees standing vigilance on the property.

Board member Ken Kantor took loads of pine needles retrieved from the museum's roof, gutters and grounds, along with the pine cones, to the dump. And those invading pine cones continue to fall!!! He's also been instrumental in mowing the vegetation on the grounds.

Bryce Blankenship of the Phoenix Pioneer Cemetery stewardship has also been very helpful in keeping the area around the museum mowed and weed eated.

Former Board member Dave Hodson, who now lives in Roseburg, even made a trip down to repair the outside watering system and make sure it is functioning.

We are very grateful to our Docents and others who help keep our museum functioning.

Spring Fling Potluck
Also celebrating 100 Yeas
of Original Museum Building
June 10th at 6:00 pm
Phoenix Museum
607 N. Church Street
Please bring a dish of food to share and your own place setting
Drinks will be provided
http://prek-8.com